DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 165 936 RC 011 102

AUTHOR Tait, John L.; And Others
TITLE Identifying the Community Power Actors: A Guide for Change Agents. North Central Regional Extension Publication 59.
INSTITUTION North Central Rural Sociology Committee.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.; Farm Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
PUB DATE Oct 78
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Agents; City Officials; *Community Action; Community Development; *Community Leaders; County Officials; *Decision Making; Guides; *Identification; Local Issues; Methods; *Power Structure; Rural Areas; Social Change; Voluntary Agencies

ABSTRACT

Purposes of this guide for change agents are to (1) present four methods for identifying community power actors (community leaders), (2) provide a description of how change agents might use each of the four methods, (3) compare the four methods, (4) suggest ways to use a combination of methods or combine elements from various methods, and (5) suggest factors for change agents to consider in selecting an appropriate method. The guide is intended for use by change agents whose major objectives focus on promoting and stimulating social change in rural communities, such as Extension workers, community development specialists, government agency personnel, school administrators, community planners, ministers, business leaders, union leaders, and voluntary association leaders. The four methods presented are the positional, reputational, decision making, and social participation; for each method, the guide gives a description, assumptions, procedures for implementation, types of power actors identified by the method, and its advantages and limitations. The appendix contains suggestions to aid the change agent in applying each method: positional--a suggested list of formal positions; reputational and decision making--sample questionnaires; social participation--sample list of voluntary organizations. (Author/RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED165936

North Central Regional Extension Publication 59
October 1978

NOV 1978
ERIC/CRESS
RECEIVED

Identifying the Community Power Actors: A Guide for Change Agents

By
John L. Tait
Janet Bokemeier
Joe M. Bohlen

Sponsored by the cooperative extension services of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John L. Tait

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

RC 011102

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the seventh in a series of bulletins by the North Central Region Extension Sociology Committee which is sponsored by the Farm Foundation and the Cooperative Extension Services of the Land-Grant Universities in the North Central States.

The authors wish to thank the Farm Foundation, Oak Brook, Illinois, whose support helped make this publication possible. The authors and the committee would also like to acknowledge the assistance and support of the North Central Region Extension Sociology administrative advisor, Hollis Hall, South Dakota State University.

The authors express appreciation to John A. Wallize, Communication Specialist—CRD-Public Affairs, Iowa State University, for his editorial suggestions and assistance. Appreciation is also extended to Diane Thada for her patience in typing drafts and the final copy for this publication.

This publication was critiqued by the North Central Region Extension Sociology Committee and several independent reviewers. The authors wish to express their appreciation to these individuals for their helpful comments and reviews.

Members of the North Central Region Extension Sociology Committee

John L. Tait, *Iowa State University, Chairperson*
Joe Donnermeyer, *Purdue University*
Hollis Hall, *South Dakota State University*
James Hildreth, *Farm Foundation*
John Holik, *University of Missouri*
Donald E. Johnson, *University of Wisconsin at Madison*
Sheldon Lowry, *Michigan State University*
John Mitchell, *Ohio State University*
Dorris W. Rivers, *Federal Extension Service*
Jerry W. Robinson, *University of Illinois*
James Satterlee, *South Dakota State University*

Other Reviewers:

George Beal, *East-West Center, Communication Institute*
D. A. Caul, *Michigan State University*
Mary Cloyd, *Iowa State University*
Arthur Johnson, *Iowa State University*
Ronald C. Powers, *Iowa State University*
James Preston, *Memphis State University*
Gordon Rose, *University of Minnesota*
Vernon Ryan, *Purdue University*
Elden Schriner, *North Dakota State University*
Harvey Schweitzer, *University of Illinois, Urbana*

UNIVERSAL INDICIA

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension Services of Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Charles E. Donhowe, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University, Ames.

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	5
Identification Methods	6
Positional Method	7
Reputational Method	9
Decison-Making Method	13
Social Participation Method	15
Comparison of Methods	17
Selecting a Method	20
Combining Methods	21
Summary	22
Appendix	23

4

page 2 blank.

PREFACE

In carrying out most community action programs, change agents will need to consider obtaining support from key community leaders. These leaders often exercise social power to affect the outcomes of community decisions. They are also referred to as community power actors.

Obtaining the support of the community power actors is usually essential to the success of community action programs. Although the community power actors do not become involved in all community issues, an effective change agent needs to have knowledge of the community power actors and how they effect community decisions.

The purpose of this publication is to present four methods that change agents may use to identify the community power actors. These include the positional, the reputational, the decison-making and the social participation methods. A description, the assumptions, the procedures to be used, the types of power actors identified, the advantages and the limitations of each method are discussed.

Because research findings indicate that the four methods tend to identify different types of power actors, a comparison of methods is presented to assist the change agent in selecting the method or combination of methods most appropriate for the change agent's community action efforts. Finally, the appendix presents suggestions to aid the change agent in applying each method to identify the community power actors. A glossary of key concepts used in the publication and a selected bibliography are also presented for the change agents' use in enhancing the knowledge and understanding of identifying the community power actors.

The publication is intended for use by change agents whose major objectives focus on promoting and stimulating social change in communities. Among such change agents are Extension workers, community development specialists, government agency personnel, school administrators, community planners, ministers, business leaders, union leaders, and voluntary association leaders. The application of the methods as presented in this publication draws upon both social science research and experience in identifying the community power actors.

Hollis Hall, Director
Cooperative Extension Service; South Dakota State University,
Adviser to North Central Rural Sociology Committee

Identifying the Community Power Actors: A Guide for Change Agents

Introduction

The success of a community action program depends on how effectively the program mobilizes human and non-human resources. Community power actors play a predominant role in community action. These individuals have been referred to as key leaders, influentials, legitimizers and decision makers. They often have social power to affect the outcomes of community decisions.

Most change agents are concerned with the role that community power actors play in affecting the outcomes of community issues. Research has indicated that power actors may play several key roles in community action programs.

Among these roles are (1) giving sanction (the authority, justification, or license to act), (2) suggesting ideas for improving the program, (3) providing resources needed to complete the program, (4) providing access to other resources both inside and outside of the community, and (5) promoting the program in the community. Community power actors may also play roles in opposing community action programs. They may prevent the emergence of community action programs or oppose them after they have been initiated.

In some cases, failure to appropriately involve the community power actors at early stages of action programs has led to their opposition to the program.

Prepared by John L. Tait, Extension Sociologist; Janet L. Bokemeier, Graduate Research Assistant; and Joe M. Bohlen, Professor; Department of Sociology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. *Research was funded by the Iowa Cooperative Extension Service and Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa, Project No. 1996.*

Considering the appropriate involvement or non-involvement of the community power actors is one important factor that change agents need to consider when developing strategies for community action programs.

Prior to developing strategies for the involvement of the power actors in community action programs, it is essential that the change agent identify the appropriate power actors for the community action program areas of concern. A change agent who is new to a community may not be aware of the identity of the community power actors. Therefore, the change agent who is new to a community often needs to identify and build communication linkages to the community power actors who will affect his or her programs.

Research indicates that who the power actors are in a community will change over time. Consequently, experienced change agents need to be aware of change occurring among community power actors and the need for the review and revision of lists of identified power actors.

The primary purpose of this publication is to outline four methods that change agents can use to identify the community power actors. They are (1) the positional, (2) the reputational, (3) the decision-making, and (4) the social participation methods. In addition, the publication discusses how each method or combination of methods may be applied by change agents. All the methods have been used in both rural and urban communities. The intent of this publication is to present applied methods based on both research and experience that will assist change agents in enhancing community development work.

IDENTIFICATION METHODS

Regardless of the method selected to identify the community power actors, the change agent needs to consider two factors prior to identifying the power actors. These are the issue area and the geographic area.

Before identifying the power actors, the change agent needs to identify the issue area (or areas) of concern. These issues should include the areas in which the change agent intends to carry out community action programs. Issues may include such areas as education, agriculture, industrial development, transportation, energy, environment, health, social services, cultural affairs, politics, youth services, recreation and urban renewal.

In addition to selecting issue areas of primary concern, the change agent should collect information to determine who has social power in the general affairs of the community. These general power actors may have social power to influence decision-making in many different issue areas in the community.

Another factor to consider, regardless of the method selected, is the relevant geographic area. The change agent needs to identify the approximate geographic area that will be affected by community action efforts. The relevant geographic area may be an unincorporated village, an incorporated town, a town and the outlying trade area, an urban community, a county or a multi-county region.

In determining the relevant geographic area, the change agent should consider the issue areas selected and the scope of his or her programs. Research indicates that the relevant geographic area changes depending upon the issue area being considered. For example, educational issues in rural areas are likely to include the town and the outlying rural areas included in the school district. On the other hand, the issue of passing a bond issue for a new town facility may include only the incorporated town as the relevant geographic area.

The change agent should consider the relevant geographic areas for the issue areas in which he or she intends to identify the community power actors. The broadest geographic area should be selected that includes the specific geographic areas related to each issue area of concern. In rural areas, this generally includes the population center and the outlying rural area. This area will include either the primary retail trade area, or the school district, or, possibly, both of these areas.

If the change agent desires to identify the power structure for a county, the power actors for each community probably will have to be identified. Although only a limited number of research studies of county-wide power structures have been conducted, the findings suggest that a unified county power structure doesn't exist, except in the case of a county-based institution such as political party organizations or where the community and county have common boundaries.

Determining the issue areas and the geographic area as a first step will prepare the change agent for the selection of an appropriate method for identifying the community power actors. The next four subsections will present four methods for identifying the community power actors.

POSITIONAL METHOD

Description

The oldest method used to identify community power actors is the positional method. The individuals who occupy key formal authority positions in the major social, economic, political, governmental, cultural, and religious institutions and in related formal voluntary associations are considered the community power actors.

Assumptions

The first major assumption is that the power to affect community decisions rests in the important positions of formal organizations in the community. The second major assumption is that those holding positions of authority actually make key decisions, while those who do not occupy such positions do not make key decisions. The success or failure of the positional method in identification of community power actors depends upon the degree to which this second basic assumption is valid. It is also assumed that positional power actors often have control over important resources sometimes needed for community action programs.

Procedures

The procedures for using the positional method focus on selecting power actors on the basis of important positions occupied in formal organizations and in the community. The change agent must determine what positions within the community are relevant for community action. The relevant positions might include: 1) the local elected officials, 2) appointed civil servants, 3) business and financial leaders, 4) elected officials of key voluntary associations, 5) agency directors, and 6) others. (See Appendix, p. 24 for Sample List).

The change agent might develop a generalized list of relevant positions whose incumbents may likely participate in several community issue areas. Certain authority positions (e.g., the mayor and city council) will likely have power to affect several or most community issues.

Other formal positions may be primarily oriented to single issue areas. The superintendent of schools may be a relevant position for educational issue areas but not for other issue areas such as health, industrialization, energy, the environment, and culture. If the change agent is primarily concerned with one or two issue areas, such as health and recreation, then it may be desirable to develop a list of relevant positions for these specific issue areas.

The change agent must establish some criteria as to which formal positions are relevant for the community action programs being planned. These criteria will depend on the size and type of community. Examples of some criteria are to include: 1) all elected positions, 2) managers of companies with a certain number (for example, 100 or more) employees, 3) presidents of banks with a given dollar amount of assets, and/or 4) all business proprietors with stores on the community's downtown square.

Next, the change agent should collect the names, addresses, occupations, and telephone numbers for the incumbents fulfilling the selected relevant positions. With changes in officers and the mobility of people, lists can readily become outdated. Therefore, this list of names should be reviewed and revised on a yearly basis. Also, as new relevant positions are created within the community, they should be added to the positional lists.

Although this may seem to require considerable time on the part of the change agent, directories of officers are often published on a yearly basis by the chamber of commerce, the city government, planning associations, and voluntary association bureaus. The change agent might check out these sources to determine if lists are already available.

If directories are not available, the change agent will need to develop a directory. The development of a directory may be considered as a community action project. In one Iowa community of approximately 30,000, a small group of women identified nearly all the voluntary associations, their purposes, and their officers. Approximately 215 voluntary associations were identified. The information was supplied to the chamber of commerce, which made plans to update it on a yearly basis.

Positional method lists can be used to screen for potential legitimizers, obtain potential board and committee members, secure access to resources, and recruit action persons for community development efforts. Also, these lists might be used for two-way communications. They could be used as mailing lists for community development messages, but they may also become a mechanism for feedback in-

formation and evaluation of community development efforts.

Procedures—Positional Method

Step 1: Determine relevant positions.

Step 2: Collect incumbents' names.

Step 3: Review and update lists yearly.

Types of Power Actors Identified

The positional method identifies the visible leaders in the community who are involved in both public and private organizations. Change agents may wish to distinguish between private organizations that are more service-oriented (e.g. chamber of commerce) and those that are member-oriented (e.g. bridge club).

Examples of public position holders at city, county, state, or federal levels that may be included are:

a. Elected government leaders—mayor, city council members, judges, school board members, legislators, etc.

b. Appointed political officers and higher civil servants—heads of departments and agencies, appointed board members, chairpersons of political parties.

Examples of private and voluntary position holders that would also be identified are:

a. Corporation executives and directors—heads of the major corporations, business and financial institutions,

b. Officeholders in service-oriented voluntary associations—presidents of chambers of commerce, parent-teacher associations, service clubs, hospital auxiliaries, industrial development corporations,

c. Formal office holders in member-oriented organizations—presidents of sports associations, church organizations, fraternal orders, labor unions.

Advantages

- The major advantage to the positional method is that these community power actors are visible, thus easily identified.
- A second major advantage is that there is little cost involved in developing a list of community power actors by using the positional method.
- A third advantage is that, from knowledge about the formal position, such as the amount of authority and responsibility vested in the position, the change agent will be able to gain insight into the incumbent's potential role in community development programs.
- A fourth advantage is that change agents who maintain more extensive lists (organizations in many different community sectors) will have a good cross-section of community leaders.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the positional method.

- The first limitation is the difficulty of determining which positions hold power and which ones do not hold power to affect various community decisions.
- Second, some positional power actors do not exercise their potential. For example, the mayor may be a figurehead and not use the power invested in his office to affect community affairs. Or, the local head of an absentee-owned corporation may limit exercise of power in community affairs only to issues where corporation interests are at stake.
- Third, the positional method generally tends to identify power actors who are in formal positions and who function in community affairs on the basis of authority. It does not identify those power actors who operate behind the scenes, are not in formal positions, and function on the basis of personal influence. For example, a very influential power actor in a key voluntary association may not be in an office within that association.

REPUTATIONAL METHOD

Description

In the 1950's, the reputational method developed as an approach to identifying community power actors. This procedure involves selecting knowledgeable community citizens who provide a list of power actors and then rank them according to their reputation for social power in community affairs.

Assumptions

The reputational method is based on the notion that power is present and involved in all social relationships. It is assumed that power to affect community decisions both influences and is a consequence of reputation. Reputation is an indicator of a power actor's potential to affect community issues and of the resources that a power actor controls. These reputations are an index of the distribution of influence in the community.

Another assumption is that knowledgeables know power actors by their reputations. Power is intangible and, therefore, measured indirectly by knowledgeables' opinions and estimations of the amount of influence that community power actors possess. The final major assumption is that community power actors cannot be identified by just observing who holds offices or participates in public meetings, board meetings, etc. Some power actors are more concealed and operate behind the scenes to affect community actions and decisions.

Procedures

Identifying the community power actors through the use of the reputational method involves interviewing knowledgeables within the community. Knowledgeables are persons who are perceived to be well-informed concerning the power structure and decision-making in the community. They are individuals who can identify those actors who have the power to affect a number of community issue areas.

Having identified a number of community knowledgeables, the change agent then interviews the knowledgeables with a questionnaire to determine the reputed community power actors. This may involve any of the following modifications:

a. *ONE-STEP PROCESS*—

Knowledgeables are asked to provide a list of community power actors. The types of questions asked vary.

b. *TWO-STEP PROCESS*—

The two-step procedure differs in that lists of power actors in various institutions or community sectors are first compiled by the change agent. The second step involves giving the lists of power actors to a panel of knowledgeables in the community who select from the list those who are reputed to have the most power to affect decisions.

c. *EXTERNAL-KNOWLEDGEABLE PROCESS*—

This modification is especially useful to the change agent with few contacts within the community. In the first step of this method, knowledgeables from outside the community are interviewed. Although these knowledgeables live outside the community of interest, they should have information and awareness of who is "in the know" in the community. These external knowledgeables are interviewed and asked to list the names of internal knowledgeables, that is, individuals living in the community who they believe have a broad, general knowledge of the community decision-making processes. In the second step of this approach, the internal knowledgeables are interviewed and asked to list the names of the community power actors.

The following guidelines are suggested when using the reputational method. These major steps are based on research experiences with the application of the reputational method (see also, Powers, 1965). Some suggestions are:

1. *DEFINING ISSUE AREAS.*

The first step involves identifying the issue areas of concern to community development organizations and change agents. In addition to specific issue areas, questions should be asked to determine who has power in the general affairs of the community.

2. *DEFINING THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA.*

The next step is identifying the geographic area in which community development issues are to be resolved. The relevant geographic area may be a single community, a county, or a region. The relevant geographic area may change depending upon the issue.

3. *SELECTING KNOWLEDGEABLES.*

After selecting the issue areas, change agents need to select a number of knowledgeables to be interviewed. Knowledgeables may include:

Bankers
Newspaper editors and radio station managers
Extension staff
Secretaries of chambers of commerce
Local government officials—city clerk, long time office holder
Utility company personnel
Ministers
Union leaders

The methods described in this publication have been used in rural and urban communities. Some adjustments may be required with different sizes of communities. As a working guideline, Powers (1965) suggested the following number of interviews by size of community:

Size of Community	Number of Knowledgeables To Interview
250 - 1,000	5
1,001 - 2,500	7
2,501 - 5,000	8
5,001 - 10,000	10
10,001 - 100,000	15

If the list of persons named as power actors is not duplicated several times after the suggested number of knowledgeables has been interviewed, it will be necessary to identify and interview more knowledgeables.

4. *DEVELOPING A QUESTIONNAIRE.*

Before interviewing the knowledgeables, the change agent should develop questions about each of the selected issue areas and about the community decision-making process. For example, one researcher asked the following question (Gamson, 1968):

> In many communities, relatively few people are able to affect the outcome of issues, sometimes because they are in a position to make key decisions or because they have the ability to persuade others to follow their leadership. Would you tell me the names of the most important and influential leaders in this community even if they do not hold public office?

Another example of a question asked in a research project is (Blankenship, 1970):

> Suppose a major project were before the community, one that required a decision by a group of leaders whom nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group—regardless of whether or not you know them personally?

To speed up interviewing, the change agent may want to limit the number of issue areas to four or less, including the area of general affairs. The decision of how many issue areas to include is important.

Several aspects need consideration in deciding the number of issues to be studied. First, the decision needs to be made concerning whether the change agent wants to explore the general power structure of the community, determining if it's elitist, pluralistic or perhaps of a sovereignty type. Or, the change agent may be interested in only a specific issue area related to the proposed community programs. Second, the size of the community might influence the number of issue areas to study. That is, with large communities the change agent would need to study more issues to get a broader spectrum of who has power. Third, the practical question of time and resources should be considered.

As a guideline, the following table suggests the number of issues to study in communities of different sizes:

Size of Community	Number of Issues to Study
250 - 1,500	3
1,501 - 5,000	4
5,001 - 10,000	6
more than 10,000	8 or more

In the Appendix (p.24) is a sample questionnaire. It is similar to one that has been used by change agents interested in development of various sectors of the community (for example, school principals, ministers, Extension directors, community charitable groups, and health groups). The questionnaire is intended only as a model for possible use in a community to illustrate how these methods have been put into action in change agents' programs. The change agent may want to make several changes. For example, he may want to change the number of individuals mentioned as influential from five to ten.

No hard and fast rules exist concerning what questions to include or how to phrase them. Questions should be phrased so they are clear, to the point, and easily read (try it out loud). These questions should be developed into a questionnaire with appropriate space to record the responses given. Before interviewing knowledgeables, the change agent should write down his own perceptions of the persons likely to be the power actors in each issue area being suggested. After this step, the knowledgeables should be interviewed.

5. *INTERVIEWING KNOWLEDGEABLES.*

After identifying the knowledgeables, the change agent must develop the approach to be used in interviewing them. It is important for the change agent to:

a. tell the prospective knowledgeable who you are,

b. establish the objective of your interview,

c. state the reasons you desire this information, and

d. tell the person how the information will be used.

It is important for the change agent to assure the knowledgeables that the information they provide will not be published or released in any way that would identify them as the source. (See sample introduction in Appendix p. 24.)

6. *SUMMARIZING.*

Once the knowledgeables have been interviewed, the change agent should summarize the names of the reputed power actors for each issue area. This can be done by counting up how many times the knowledgeables mentioned each individual as a power actor. For instance, Mayor Clark was mentioned by three knowledgeables in the area of general affairs and by four knowledgeables in the area of politics.

In any of the reputational procedures, the change agent must then decide on a "cutting off point." That is, the change agent must decide how many power actors to include in the power actor pool. Criteria that may be used include the number of times an individual is named by knowledgeables or the number of power actors that represent a certain proportion of all nominations.

In the final decision, including too many individuals in the power actor pool is preferable to including too few and possibly not including someone who *is* a power actor. The pool of power actors is made up of those individuals named several times. The assumption is made that the individuals with the most "votes" in each issue area are the top power actors of the community for that issue area. The list of top power actors for all issue areas constitutes the power actor pool for the community.

7. *CHECKING RELIABILITY.*

Once the pool of power actors has been identified, the change agent should check the reliability of the lists. One method for checking reliability is to go to the two or three persons named most frequently and ask these people the same questions the change agents asked the knowledgeables. If the information from the knowledgeables has been accurate, the answers obtained from these persons should closely duplicate the list already made. If additional names are suggested by more than one of these persons, the change agent should include them in the power actor pool, particularly if they have been previously mentioned by at least one knowledgeable.

At this point, the change agent has identified the pool of community power actors. It is suggested that the entire process be repeated at intervals of two or three years.

Procedures—Reputational Method

Step 1: Determine list of knowledgeables.

Step 2: Develop interview questions.

Step 3: Interview knowledgeables.

Step 4: Decide criteria to be in power actor pool.

Step 5: Repeat process regularly.

Types of Power Actors Identified

The reputational method tends to identify general power actors who are "behind the scenes" as well as power actors who are visible to the general public. "Behind the scenes" power actors are community power actors who may not participate in the public forum but may play major roles in formulating policies and decisions and exerting influence through informal processes. Generally, this approach identifies the economic dominants (executives of major corporations, businessmen, bankers, financial leaders), elected officials who are reputed to be power holders, professionals (lawyers, doctors, dentists), and political leaders.

Advantages

There are several advantages of the reputational method.

- This method identifies a wide scope of community power actors. Those who operate "behind the scenes" are identified as well as power actors who hold formal positions and/or who are visible. Power actors who can exercise influence to prevent some problem areas from becoming community issues or to block decisions and programs also are identified.
- Another advantage of the reputational method is that one can determine the reputed community power actors for a number of community issue areas if these issue areas are built into the questionnaire design used by the change agent. This issue-specific modification is used in the questionnaire in the Appendix(p.24) around the issue areas of government affairs, business and industry, human services and education.

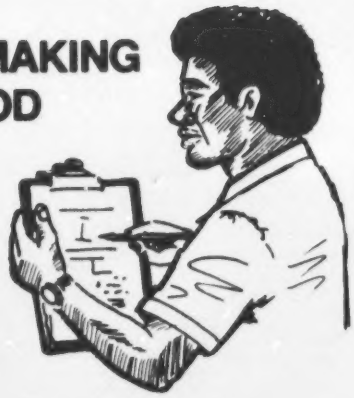
- Another advantage is the relative ease with which the reputational method may be used to identify power actors. Interviews can be conducted with a reasonable number of community knowledgeables. In addition, the reputational method is relatively easy to repeat at certain intervals.

Limitations

- The question often arises about whether the knowledgeables selected are in fact knowledgeable about community affairs. This limitation can be reduced to some extent by (1) selecting knowledgeables from as many institutional sectors of the community as possible (that is, from government, health, recreation, politics, education, etc.) and (2) checking for reliability as previously discussed.
- Another limitation of the reputational method is that the reputed community power actors may or may not actually exercise power to affect community decisions. The criticism has been made, particularly by some political scientists, that the reputed power holders may not actually participate in making community decisions. The critics claim that the reputational method identifies community power actors who have social status in the community, but not necessarily those who participate in actual decision-making.
- Finally, some claim this method tends to identify an "elitist" structure of generalized social status but fails to recognize the specialization by issue areas in community affairs. Thus, it fails to identify the specialized power holders, for example, the school superintendent who participates only in school issues or the recreational power holder who only participates in recreational issues facing the community.

Some of these limitations may be minimized by development and refinement of the research design and questionnaire construction or by combining the reputational method with other methods in identifying community power actors.

DECISION-MAKING METHOD



Description

In response to the reputational method, Dahl (1961) developed the decision-making method (also called event analysis). This method involves tracing the history of a collective decision concerning at least one issue area. Power actors are those identified as actually participating in the concrete decision and whose suggestions and demands are incorporated in the final outcome.

Assumptions

The basic assumption underlying this method is that social power to affect decisions is made through participation in decision-making processes. This participation is an index of the distribution of power. Actual participation in decisions is established as the criterion for identifying the community power actors.

Procedures

When using the decision-making method to identify the community power actors, the change agent selects a number of decisions representative of all community decisions. The community decisions investigated may have occurred in the past, or the change agent may select some current issues that have just been initiated and for which decisions have not yet been made. Examples of community decisions are; obtaining a new industry, establishment of a mental health clinic, passing a school bond issue, creating a citizen action council and passing bond issues to improve hospitals, libraries and other community facilities.

As in the reputational method, the change agent should select community decision areas highly relevant to community development or to the issue areas in which the change agent will likely be initiating action efforts in the future. To help decide which decisions to select for study, the change agent may want to interview a knowledgeable in the issue area. For example, if the change agent is trying to improve the quality of health care in a county, the administrator of the county hospital could be interviewed concerning recent collective decisions in the health issue area. Through studying these decisions or issues, the change agent should be able to identify those power actors who actually participated in making decisions and who may likely participate in making future decisions in those issue areas.

In the decision-making method, the change agent studies the issue from its initiation through its completion to determine the decision makers at each of the stages. Although this process is time consuming, it does provide the opportunity to determine who the legitimizers were and whether or not they became involved in the more action-oriented phases of the issue.

Action-oriented leaders are also identified in the decision-making method. The roles of these leaders and the resources they contributed to the community action program can be determined.

There are several techniques that the change agent might use to determine the decision makers. Through interviews with actual participants in completed action programs, the change agent can reconstruct the steps of the action program and ask questions to determine who made decisions at each step. (See Appendix p. 26 for sample interview questionnaire). In addition to interviews, the change agent might study any documents related to the resolution of the issue to determine who the decision makers were. This might involve reading minutes of meetings, special reports, committee reports, newspaper accounts, and other written documents pertaining to the issue.

In areas where the issue is just emerging, the change agent might attempt to attend all formal meetings related to the issue and then through observation determine who the decision makers are. Also, personal interviews and informal contacts can be sources for additional information on issues that are in process or are just emerging as relevant issues.

After determining the decision makers for several issue areas, the change agent can then determine a pool of power actors. One criteria that can be used to determine the pool of power actors is the number of successes that each power actor has had in supporting or blocking proposals and decisions.

The number of actual decisions that the researcher traces is arbitrary. A general guideline is to trace decisions representing several different community issue areas, with at least one decision in the specific area of interest to the change agent.

As with the reputational method, the change agent needs to study several decisions in different is-

sue areas to determine whether a generalized power structure exists that affects most issue areas or whether specialized power structures exist that deal with single issues. Finally, as new community issues emerge, the change agent can follow these issues to identify the key decision makers. As with the other methods, lists of power actors identified by the decision-making method should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

Procedures—Decision-Making Method

Step 1: Select representative community decisions.

Step 2: Include relevant decision areas.

Step 3: Trace decision-making process.

Step 4: Determine leaders in decision.

Step 5: Review new community decisions of interest.

Types of Power Actors Identified

The community power actors identified by this method are those who are or were active or instrumental in the resolution of community issues or problems. If several community decisions are studied, one can establish whether the community power actors are: (1) general power actors, that is, those who participate as decision makers on several community issues, or (2) specialized power actors, that is, those who appear as decision makers on only one major community decision. Because this method studies actual behavior rather than reputed power, the community power actors are visible leaders.

Advantages

- Through the decision-making method, the change agent can determine the actual possession and use of resources, not just the reputation for having and using them.
- If the actual behavior of community power actors who participate in several issue areas is determined, one can identify general power actors by the actual overlap of power from one issue to another.
- Through analyzing several issue areas, the specialized community power actors who affect only one issue area can be traced and their actual role determined.
- By tracing a number of community decisions from the initiation through the execution and final stages of the decision, the roles of the participants can be determined at each stage of the issue. This permits the change agent to delineate the extent to which the community power actors who make the policy decisions on each issue also actively participate in the action or implementation phases to execute the policy decisions.

Limitations

- Studying a number of representative community decisions is rather time consuming and costly. If one is to determine whether one power structure affects the decisions in all major issues before the community or whether several power structures, each varying from one major issue to the next, are in operation, then several issues must be studied.
- Since the decision-making method assumes that actual behavior is a measure of leadership, it fails to determine whether some community power actors operated "behind the scenes" to affect the decisions.
- The decision-making method also ignores power actors who may be able to keep latent issues from emerging into open controversy.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION METHOD

Description

The social participation method (also called social activity method) involves the listing of participants in voluntary associations in the community. Power actors are those who are holding formal positions in voluntary associations and those who are participating in their activities. They are the community members with the highest degree of social participation in voluntary associations.

Assumptions

In the social participation method, the major assumption is that power to affect community decisions is acquired through participation and holding offices in the community's voluntary associations. Those who are active in community decisions and affairs are also assumed to be community members who actively participate as members, officers, or committee members and in other formal activities in voluntary associations.

Procedures

The social participation method involves determining which members of the community have the highest social participation in voluntary associations. Different criteria may be used to determine social participation. A number of studies have developed rough indexes of memberships in voluntary associations. Other studies have included the offices held and memberships in various committees. Through developing an index or score for each member in the voluntary associations, it can be determined which community members have the highest levels of participation.

Because time and financial constraints make it virtually impossible for change agents to study all the voluntary associations within a community, the change agent should select a number of key community voluntary associations. The criteria for selecting relevant community voluntary associations might be the extent to which the voluntary associations are oriented to community affairs, their resource base, and/or the perceived relevancy of the voluntary associations to the change agent's action program. (See Appendix p. 29 for sample list of voluntary organizations).

Having identified the key community voluntary associations, the change agent would obtain lists of the membership, officers, board of directors, and committees for each key voluntary association. This data might be gathered by making a personal contact with one of the voluntary association's officers and asking for a membership list and a listing of the officers, board of directors, and committees.

After the collection of data from the selected voluntary associations, the change agent would compare and determine the overlaps in membership, officers, board of directors, and committees. The change agent might arbitrarily assign weights to the various types of participation in voluntary associations. For example, membership in a voluntary association might be assigned 1 point; serving on a committee or board, 2 points; serving as a committee chairman or board chairman, 3 points; and serving as an officer, 4 points.

Once scores for each individual for the various types of participation in each voluntary association in which he or she had membership are assigned, a total participation score for each individual can be determined. Those with the highest participation scores would be defined as the pool of community power actors. Like the other methods, it is essential to update this list on a regular basis, preferably each year or every other year.

Procedures—Social Participation Method

Step 1: Select key voluntary associations.

Step 2: Obtain list of association participants.

Step 3: Compare and determine overlaps.

Step 4: List power actors with most participation.

Step 5: Update regularly.

Types of Power Actors Identified

This method identifies visible participants in various activities of voluntary associations. If a number of voluntary associations are studied, one can determine the overlap of memberships among the various voluntary associations. This approach tends to identify "effectors," that is, community members who become highly involved in action phases of voluntary associations.

Advantages

- The major advantage of this method is that it identifies power actors who are *active* in community affairs.
- Research studies of community leadership have found that key community power actors had been active in voluntary associations often prior to becoming key community power actors. The social participation method may, therefore, be used to identify younger members of the community who aspire to becoming key power actors.
- Also, an advantage of the social participation method is that it identifies community members who are likely to participate in the action phases of community issues.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the social participation method.

- First, this procedure is time consuming and costly for the change agent. Study of several major voluntary associations in the community requires the collection of data on membership, officers, committees, and other activities for each voluntary association.
- This method also identifies only the active power actors in community affairs and not the power actors who operate behind the scenes.
- The question comes up as to whether indexes based on membership and offices in voluntary associations are necessarily indicative of involvement on projects in the voluntary association.
- Also, there is the question of the extent to which the power actors identified through the social participation method are in fact the decision makers on key community issues. Research findings tend to support the idea that many of those who formulate community policies and participate in community decision-making, while holding memberhips in key voluntary associations in the community, are not currently officers or active participants in voluntary associations. When one analyzes the past behavior of key community power actors, they have often held memberships (and continue to), served as officers, and participated actively in voluntary associations. Participation in voluntary associations may be perceived as the training ground for developing key community power actors.
- Finally, the study of social participation in the voluntary associations fails to identify the specific issues in which the high-score participators are likely to be decision makers or active participants.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the advantages, disadvantages, assumptions, types of leaders identified, and procedures used with each of the four methods discussed in this publication.

COMPARISON OF METHODS

One question facing change agents is which method to use to identify community power actors. If each method would identify a similar pool of community power actors, the change agent could select that method that uses the least resources in terms of time and cost. If, on the other hand, each of the four methods identifies a different pool of community power actors, then the selection of a method becomes more complex.

A limited number of comparative studies of the four methods have been conducted to determine if the four methods identify the same power actor pool. The findings from these studies are not conclusive, but tend to indicate the various methods select different types of leaders.

One comparative study was conducted by Freeman et al. (1970) in the Syracuse, New York, metropolitan area. The basic objective of their study was to determine the extent to which these four

TABLE 1. Summary table: Four methods of identifying power actors

METHOD	ASSUMPTIONS	TYPE OF LEADER IDENTIFIED	ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
POSITIONAL	Power rests in important positions of formal organizations. Position holders make decisions and control resources.	Higher civil servants, corporation executives, elected and appointed formal office holders, voluntary association officers.	Leaders are visible, thus easily identified. Less costly. Insight into potential role. Good cross-section of leaders.	Positional leaders may not exercise their potential. Fails to identify informal leaders. Difficult to determine which positions do or do not have power.
REPUTATIONAL	Power is reflected in reputation. Knowledgeables know power actors by reputation. Some power actors are concealed.	General leaders that are concealed as well as those visible to the public.	Identifies visible and concealed leaders. Determines leaders in several issue areas. Relative ease in carrying out technique.	Determining who is or is not knowledgeable. Reputed power may not be exercised power. Fails to identify specialized power holders.
DECISION MAKING	Power is acquired through participation in decision-making processes.	Instrumental leaders in the resolution of community issues.	Determines actual behavior rather than reputation. Reveals overlap of power in issue areas. Identifies specialized power holders. Identifies roles of power actors.	Time consuming and costly. Fails to identify leaders who are "behind the scenes" or in "non decisions."
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION	Power is acquired through participation in activities and offices in voluntary associations.	Visible participants in activities of voluntary associations.	Identifies active community leaders and those likely to be active in action programs.	Time consuming and costly. Fails to identify concealed leaders or specific area of participation.

methods would identify the same persons as being in the top leadership category. In the Freeman study, procedures in using each method were similar to those described in this publication.

In comparing the research findings (the list of power actors identified with each method), Freeman et al. (1970) found little agreement in the top 32 leaders identified by each method, with the exception of the comparison of the reputational and positional methods. If there had been a perfect overlap between the two methods, the lists of power actors would agree 100 percent. The comparison of the two methods indicated a 74 percent overlap. Table 3 shows the percentage of overlap in using the different methods to identify power actors. Notice that the percentage overlap is usually low, that is, between 20 and 40 percent. Freeman concluded that reputation for leadership seems to derive primarily from position, not from participation.

TABLE 2. Summary of procedures.

1. **Positional Method**

   Determine relevant positions for your community action effort.

   Collect names, addresses, and telephone numbers for the incumbents of these positions.

   Maintain and update yearly lists of these position holders.

   As new relevant positions are created, add them to the list.

2. **Reputational Method**

   Select relevant issue areas.

   Select an appropriate number of knowledgeables.

   Select appropriate kind of knowledgeables.

   Develop approach to use with knowledgeables.

   Develop interview questions and questionnaire.

   Write down your own perceptions of who has power.

   Interview each knowledgeable.

   Decide criteria to be in power actor pool.

   Check reliability.

   Make any adjustments based on reliability check.

   Repeat the process every two or three years.

3. **Decision-Making Method**

   Select a number of decisions representative of all selected issue areas.

   Include decisions that are highly relevant for your programs.

   Trace the decision-making process in each decision from its initiation to completion by interviews, documents, newspapers, attending meetings, and personal contacts.

   Determine who the leaders are for each decision and issue area.

   Review new decisions of interest, determining who the power actors are.

4. **Social Participation Method**

   Select a number of key community voluntary associations.

   Obtain lists of members, officers, directors, and committees for each selected voluntary association.

   Compare and determine overlaps in membership, officers, board of directors, and committees.

   Define those as having the greatest participation as a pool of community leaders.

   Update on a regular basis.

TABLE 3. Comparison of methods: Percentage of agreement in power actors identified.[a]

Method:	Decision-Making	Social Participation	Reputational	Positional
Decision-Making	100%	25%	33%	39%
Social Participation		100%	25%	22%
Reputational			100%	74%
Positional				100%

[a] *Freeman et al. (1970:p. 345)*

Another comparative study was conducted by Blankenship (1970) in two New York communities. Blankenship compared the reputational and decision-making methods. The procedures used were similar to those outlined for these two methods in this publication. In both communities, the top 14 leaders as identified through the reputational method were compared with the top 14 leaders in each of five community issue areas as determined by the decision-making method.

A number of power actors in both communities were identified by the decision-making method as playing roles in one or another of the five decisions. For the most part, these power actors who tended to specialize in only one or two issue areas were not

identified through the reputational method. Power actors who participated in three or more of the five decisions as determined by the decision-making procedure tended to be identified through the reputational procedure as having a general reputation for power in community affairs.

Blankenship (1970) concluded that there was considerable overlap in the results produced by the two methods. The power actors who participate in making decisions in several issue areas are also generally recognized as having a reputation for power. The reputational method as used in the Blankenship study generally failed to identify the power actors who participated as decision makers in only one issue area. In comparison with the Freeman et al. (1970) study, Blankenship did not find as great a discrepancy between the power actors identified through the reputational and decision-making methods.

A general conclusion is that in terms of types of leaders identified, the positional method will likely identify the institutional leaders, the office holders and the visible leaders. The reputational method will tend to identify the reputed leaders, the generalized leaders and both visible and non-visible leaders. Through using the decision-making method, generalized and specialized activists, actual leaders and visible leaders are likely to be identified. The social participation method will likely identify the effectors, the voluntary association leaders and visible leaders.

In summary, the four methods have some tendency to identify different power actor pools and different types of leaders. Because research findings are inconclusive at this stage, it would seem desirable for change agents to consider several factors in selecting a method.

SELECTING A METHOD

The particular method which the change agent selects will vary depending upon (1) the objectives for the change agent's action programs, (2) the types of power actors one desires to identify, (3) the resources available to identify the power actors and (4) the change agent's style. Each of these factors will be briefly discussed below.

- **Objectives**

If the objective is to carry out action programs in several community issue areas, the change agent will likely want to identify the power actors for each specific issue area. Considering that the positional and social participation methods do not identify power actors by specific issue areas, more appropriate methods to achieve this objective are the reputational and decision-making methods. These two methods also can determine whether there is a generalized power structure that affects decisions in several community issue areas, or whether the power structure varies among issue areas.

In the situation where the change agent perceives a continuing involvement in community action programs over many years, rather than a short, single action program, a combination of methods is suggested. The positional method and either the reputational or decision-making method may be combined. Combining methods will be discussed in the next section of this publication.

- **Types of Power Actors**

Another criterion to consider is the type of power actors that the change agent desires to identify. Before selecting a method, the change agent should consider the types of power actors to be identified and select the appropriate method(s) to identify them. Table 1 (p. 17) presents a summary of the types of power actors identified by each method.

In deciding on the appropriate type of power actor, the change agent should consider questions such as the following. Does the change agent desire to identify the power actors who formulate the policies and directions of community issues? Or does the change agent desire to identify the action-oriented power actors? In some cases, the objective may be to identify both types of power actors. The change agent may also want to identify the visible power actors, the non-visible power actors who operate "behind the scenes" or both.

If the change agent is interested in identifying the action-oriented power actors within the community, the most appropriate methods to achieve this objective are the decision-making and social participation methods. Generally, the positional and reputational methods, unless designed differently than described, do not identify action-oriented leaders.

- **Resources Available**

The resources available for identifying the community power actors is another important criterion in selecting a method. Most change agents have limited time and financial resources with which to identify the community power actors.

Generally, the methods that require the least resources in terms of time and finances are the positional and reputational. The time and cost of using the decision-making method is higher if the power actors are to be identified in several community issue areas. Resources needed for the social participation method depend upon how many community organizations are selected for the study.

One strategy for identifying the community power actors is to involve several members of the change agency in the identification process. This can minimize the time that any one change agent needs to allocate to the project. For example, the members of a social service agency might design a group project for identifying the community power actors which involves several staff members.

- **Expertise of the Change Agent**

The style of the change agent also will affect the selection of the method. Change agents with limited experience in conducting interviews may be hesitant to select a method that involves interviewing. Skills in conducting interviews can be developed through practice sessions and pre-testing the questionnaire.

Change agents new to a community may feel hesitant to conduct interviews. Prior to conducting interviews, they should visit with other change agents who can provide background information regarding the community. In some cases, the change agent may decide not to do the interviewing, but involve other change agents in conducting the interviews.

COMBINING METHODS

As the four methods have some tendency to identify different types of power actors, another alternative for change agents is to use a combination of methods or combine elements from the various methods into one method. For change agents with primary roles in community development, it is suggested that, at a minimum, the positional method be used to maintain an updated list of power actors.

The positional method should identify those power actors who are in positions of authority. In addition to identifying persons who are in elected positions, this method may identify many of the power actors in non-elected positions if these positions, (for example, corporation executives, business heads, board members, and appointed officials) are included in the positional lists. The major disadvantage with relying solely on the positional method is, however, its limitations in identifying key power actors who may operate "behind the scenes" and, thus, lack visibility in community affairs. The positional method has often been supplemented by combining elements from the other three methods to identify those power actors who are not in authoritative positions.

Another approach the change agent could use is a combination of elements from the reputational and decision-making methods. Under the basic technique of interviewing knowledgeables with a questionnaire, as in the reputational method, the questionnaire might be designed to gather two types of data.

First, a few questions might be asked to gather perceptions from the knowledgeables about the reputation for power. An example of this is the question that asks who has the most power to affect decisions within the community when you think of all the activities of the community.

The second type of questions relate to participants in decisions in specific issue areas that have already been supported or blocked in the community. For example, a question might be asked to determine the actual decision makers for a bond issue to build a new community hospital. Also, questions can be asked to determine who was successful in blocking community issues that have been defeated by the community. Asking the knowledgeables about actual decisions that have been made is combining elements from the decision-making method with the reputational method. This can overcome some of the limitations often mentioned about the use of these methods.

SUMMARY

The major purposes of this publication are to (1) present four different methods for identifying the community power actors, (2) provide a description of how change agents might use each of the four methods, (3) compare the methods for identifying the community power actors, (4) suggest ways to use a combination of methods or combine elements from the various methods into one method, and (5) suggest factors for the change agent to consider in selecting an appropriate method.

In conclusion, the authors believe it is essential for change agents, particularly those concerned with community development issues, to have a knowledge and understanding of community decision makers and how they affect community decisions. Because legitimation with power actors is an important step in the process of community action programs, failure to obtain legitimation may result in the defeat of the change agent's program (Beal, 1964). The allocation of some time and resources to identifying power actors, maintaining updated lists, and building linkages and relationships with community power actors will enhance most community action efforts.

APPENDIX

Contents **Page**

Positional Method: Suggested List of Formal Positions 24

Reputational Method. Sample Questionnaire 24

Decision-Making Method: Sample Questionnaire 26

Social Participation Method: Sample List of Voluntary Organizations 29

Bibliography 30

Glossary 31

POSITIONAL METHOD

Suggested List of Formal Positions

Mayor or city manager

City or town council

Other local governmental positions
- City clerk
- City attorney
- Sheriff
- Police chief
- Assessor-building inspector
- Zoning commissioner
- Board of supervisors

Elected board members (examples: hospital, park, fair or utility)

Local judges, justice of the peace

Political party precinct and county chairpersons

Presidents of voluntary associations in community

Presidents of chambers of commerce or industrial development corporations

Presidents of service clubs and auxiliaries

Heads of fraternal orders, patriotic organizations, or private clubs

Presidents of country clubs

Presidents of women's organizations

Presidents of religious organizations (examples: United Christian Women's Club, ministerial association)

Presidents of farm organizations or co-ops

Presidents of labor unions

Presidents and directors of banks, savings and loans associations

Heads of major corporations, companies or industries

Heads of departments or agencies (examples: social services, farmer's home admin., conservation, recreation)

Presidents of charitable organizations

Superintendent of schools

School principals

Hospital administrator

Chief of staff at local hospital

Director of county bar association

Professional specialists in community (example: only veterinarian in a farm community, only accountant)

Children and youth recreation programs (scouts, baseball)

Managers and editors of mass media.

REPUTATIONAL METHOD

Sample Questionnaire to Use to Identify The Power Structure of a Community

Suggested Introduction and Question Format to Use in Interviewing Knowledgeables

I. Suggested Introduction

A. Introduce yourself and position (if you do not personally know the knowledgeable).

B. Discuss the rationale for the interview (develop your own stylo). An *example* of an introduction rationale that might be used by change agents in Extension Service in an interview is:

> As you may know, the Extension Service is interested in providing educational services for all the people in the community. We've been known for many years for our work with agricultural development, home economics, 4-H and youth, and community development and public affairs.
>
> We know that successful community efforts (school bond issues, park facilities, industrial development, preventative health) are the results of effective leadership by key people. Our success is related to our knowledge of the total community, identification of the key people and our capacity to meet the informational needs that they and other community members have.
>
> Because of this desire to be even more effective, we are asking several persons like yourself to describe the way people work together to make decisions and plans in this community for several kinds of issues.

C. Use of data (Make sure they understand this, put it in your own words).

> We expect to use the information we get on community organizations and leadership to help us do a more effective job in the Extension Service. None of the information which you give us will be published or released in any way which would identify you as the source.
>
> Are there any questions you would like to ask before I begin?

(At this point try to find a quiet, comfortable place to answer questions. Be sure you have pencils and a lap board to use to write on in case there isn't a table or desk.)

II. Community Organizations

A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

As I indicated, I would like to ask several questions about community influentials and groups. Just so we understand what we are talking about, COMMUNITY means the city of

---

1. There are many organizations in every community.
   a. In your opinion, which are the *five* most influential organizations in this community?

b. In your opinion, who are the two most influential people in each of the organizations you have named?

(If the knowledgeable has not mentioned a women's organization, you might want to probe further with this question.)

**c. I notice that you have not mentioned any women's organizations, what are the most influential women's organizations in this community (if any)?

d. Please rank the top *five* of the organizations that you have mentioned from *1* (most influential) to *5* (fifth most influential).

Name of Organization	Rank	Persons Most Influential

III. General Community Influentials

A. COMMUNITY INFLUENTIALS

Many individuals play an important role in community decisions and issues. Some people can influence community members to support a project while others may be able to influence people to reject a proposal.

1. Considering the general affairs of this community; that is, all of the issues and community decision areas where influence is exercised in this community:
   a. Who are five people you believe to be the *most influential* (carry the most weight) in _____; that is, who can make a project go, or if opposed, probably stop it?
   b. What are their occupations?
   c. What is the major reason you named each of these persons?
   d. Would you please rank the top five of them 1-5? (1 is most influential, 2 is second most influential, etc.)

Name	Rank	Occupation	Major Reasons

B. SPECIFIC ISSUE AREA INFLUENTIALS

1. In relation to educational affairs in this community:
   a. Who are five people you believe to be the *most influential* (carry the most weight) in blocking or supporting educational decisions?
   b. What are their occupations?
   c. What is the major reason you named each of these persons?
   d. Please indicate whether each of those named is involved primarily in a *private* or *public* education area.
   e. Would you please rank the top five of them from 1-5?

Name	Rank	Occupation	Major Reasons	Public or Private

2. Considering the human services of this community:
   a. Who are five people you believe to be the *most influential* (carry the most weight) in affecting *community* human services decisions?
   b. What are their occupations?
   c. What is the major reason you named each of these persons?
   d. Would you please rank the top five of them from 1-5?

Name	Rank	Occupation	Major Reasons

These questions and response format could be used to identify and rank power actors in other specific issue areas such as business, industry, politics or local government.

3. Considering other community issues and concerns, who are the five people you believe to be most influential regarding each of these issues?

ISSUE OR CONCERN MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

TOURISM— _____

HEALTH— _____

HOUSING— _____

YOUTH— _____

TRANSPORTATION— _____

IV. Other Questions

A. What role do the newspaper, local TV and radio stations play in community affairs? How do they help form opinions on salient community issues?

B. What effect do business people have on civic issues in contrast to nonbusiness people (professionals, labor leaders, government officials)? For example, do barbers, restaurant owners, etc., tend to take advantage of a captive audience to promote their personal views on community projects?

C. Are there any informal groups or "closed" organizations (non public) that tend to shape and determine the destiny of community projects?

D. Are most decisions made concerning community issues brought to the attention of the public by one individual or by a group? Who are they?

E. Information on the Person being Interviewed

Name: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Years lived in community: _____

What community organizations do you belong to now? How many years have you been a member? Have you been an officer in the past five years? Have you been active beyond the local level (that is, district, state, national)?

Name of Organization	Years	Local Officer	Active Beyond Local	In What Way
		Yes No	Yes No	
		Yes No	Yes No	

F. Interview Conclusion

Ask if the participant has any final questions. Then thank the respondent by expressing your appreciation and gratitude for respondent's time, cooperation and thoughtful comments.

DECISION-MAKING METHOD

Decision-Making Method Sample Questionnaire to Use to Identify the Power Structure of a Community

Suggested Introduction and Question Format to Use in Interviewing Issue Participants

I. Suggested Introduction

A. Introduce yourself and position (if you do not personally know the participants).

B. Discuss the rationale for the interview (develop your own style). An *example* of an introduction rationale that might be used by change agents in Extension Service in an interview is:

As you may know, the Extension Service is interested in providing services for all the people in this county. We've been known for many years for our work with agricultural development, home economics, and 4-H and youth and community development and public affairs.

We know that successful community efforts (school bond issues, park facilities, industrial development, preventative health) are the results of effective leadership by key people. Our success is related to our knowledge of the total community, identification of the key people and our capacity to meet the informational needs that they and other community members have.

Because of this desire to be even more effective, we are asking several persons like yourself to describe the way people work together to make decisions and plans in this community for several kinds of issues.

C. Use of data. (Make sure they understand this, put in your own words.)

We expect to use the information we get on community organizations and leadership to help us do a more effective job in the Extension Service. None of the information which you give us will be published or released in any way which would identify you as the source.

Are there any questions you would like to ask before I begin?

(At this point try to find a quiet, comfortable place to answer questions. Be sure you have pencils and a lap board to use to write on in case there isn't a table or desk.)

1. What major community development issues has the community faced in the last five years?

ISSUE	DATE INITIATED	DATE CONCLUDED OR DECIDED

2. What was the major, key issue in the community that created the greatest amount of concern and community-wide interest?

3. When a really tough issue comes up in this community, who are the people you would expect to get or be involved?

I am aware that you have been involved in a recent community development project in this community (clearly indicate what project you are referring to). In the next several questions I would like to discuss how the community and its leaders worked together on this project.

4. First, please tell me how you first became aware of the need for this project.

(The following are additional questions to ask if you still want more information concerning the participants first awareness of problem).

When exactly were you first aware of the need?

Who brought this need to your attention?

Was there a crises or turning point that aroused your interest?

5. This need had existed for some time, what was there about the situation at this point that made the community leaders decide to get involved or to do something about this problem?

6. Who was involved in the early, initiating stage in this community development issue? What was each of their roles?

NAME	ROLE

7. Who had the expert knowledge that was needed in the initial planning stages of this project? (for example, was there any legal, monetary, social welfare, zoning, or governmental information needed and who provided it?)

8. In relation to this community issue, what alternatives were proposed? Who suggested each one and/or tried to persuade others to try it? How did 'others' respond to these alternatives?

ALTERNATIVE	PROPOSER	OTHERS RESPONSE

9. After the initial discussions of the problem and the possible alternatives for action, who was responsible for really getting the action started? Who else supported this action?

ACTION INITIATOR	SUPPORTERS

10. In regards to this point in the program (the mobilization of resources and launching of the project), would you outline explicitly what was needed to be done to get the project really in action?

11. Who did the program organizers check with for legitimation or a final okay? Was it formal or informal?

_____

12. Who was contacted to gain support or approval of project plans? (Include name even if person is not in a formal position.)

_____

13. In most small communities there is some reluctance to accept changes. Was there anyone who was in opposition to certain plans or alternatives? At some time, were any of them ever successful in vetoing or changing a suggested plan? Describe how they made their opposition known?

_____

14. Often the initial group involved in a community issue is relatively small. Please tell me how this group persuaded others to get involved after the initial stages?

_____

15. In response to this question, I would like you to focus on your personal involvement in this project. Describe the events that you were involved in and the role that you played in each.

_____

16. It has been suggested that in the course of a community development program, there are different stages and activities such as those listed here. As I refer to each step, would you please indicate who was most involved in this?

a. Initiation of interest

_____

b. Planning for needs and alternatives

_____

c. Informal legitimation

_____

d. Formal legitimation

_____

e. Staffing project

_____

f. Publicity and communication

_____

g. Financing

_____

h. Getting public support or approval

_____

i. Setting up goals

_____

j. Putting plan into action

_____

k. Seeing program through to conclusion

_____

l. Evaluating outcome

_____

17. Community leaders often support community programs by donating or investing needed resources for the program. A list of some resources which may be needed in a program follows. For each individual whom you indicated as a participant in this community decision, select the resources that were important in their leadership.

(Hand the participant a separate list of resources.)

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Contacts with others in the community
Contacts with others outside of the community
Control over credit or funding
Control over jobs
Esteem
Ethnic solidarity
Human relations skills
Knowledge or expertness
Officiation or legitimacy
Personal energy
Personal wealth
Popularity or charisma
Right to vote
Skills of their profession
Social standing
Time

NAME OF INFLUENTIAL **RESOURCES**

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. As you think about all the areas in which decisions are made concerning community affairs, are there any people who are influential or who would generally be most actively involved in these decisions of general affairs of the community?

OR

Who are the people who have influence and are actively involved in many issue areas and are important in making decisions in the community?

NAME OF GENERAL POWER ACTORS

_____

_____

19. Information on the Participant interviewed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

INTERVIEW CONCLUSION

Express your appreciation and gratitude for respondent's time, cooperation and thoughtful comments. You may want to leave a professional card with name and address. Ask if the participant has any final questions. Thank the respondent again.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Examples of Voluntary Organizations in Different Issue Areas

Health
- Hospital auxiliaries
- American Red Cross
- American Cancer Society
- County heart association

Economic (Business, Industry)
- Industrial development corporation
- Chamber of commerce
- Junior chamber of commerce
- Business and professional women's organizations

Politics
- League of Women Voters
- Young Republicans/Democrats

Religion
- Holy name society
- Inner-church activities committee
- Church women or men followship
- Church youth fellowship
- Ministerial association

Education
- Adult education council
- Extension council
- School teachers association
- Parent-Teachers Association
- Booster club

Service and Recreation
- Kiwanis
- Lions
- Boy Scouts
- Country club
- Community women clubs
- Newcomers club

Agriculture
- Farm Bureau
- Farmers Home Administration
- Fair board
- 4-H extension leaders

Fraternal or Patriotic
- Shriners
- Daughters of American Revolution
- Masons
- American Legion

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AIKEN, MICHAEL, and PAUL E. MOTT. The Structure of Community Power. Random House, Inc. New York, New York. 1970.

BEAL, GEORGE and DARYL J. HOBBS. The Process of Social Action in Community and Area Development. Iowa Cooperative Extension Service. Soc. 16. 1964.

BLANKENSHIP, L. VAUGHN. Community Power and Decision Making: A Comparative Evaluation of Measurement Techniques. pp 348-358. In: *The Structures of Community Power*. Michael Aiken and Paul E. Mott, editors. Random House, Inc., New York, New York. 1970.

BOHLEN, JOE M., GEORGE M. BEAL, GERALD E. KLONGLAN, and JOHN L. TAIT. A comparative analysis of Community Power Structures: A Delineation and Comparative Analysis of Power Structures in Five Iowa Communities. Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. Rural Soc. Rpt. 50. 1967.

BOHLEN, JOE M., JOHN L. TAIT, GEORGE M. BEAL, and GERALD E. KLONGLAN. An Analysis of Influence and Authority as Components of Social Power in Five Iowa Communities. Unpublished paper presented at the Rural Sociological Meetings. 1966.

CLARK, TERRY N. Community Structure and Decision Making: Comparative Analysis. Chandler Publishing. Scranton, Pa. 1968.

DAHL, ROBERT A. Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City. Yale University Press. New Haven, Conn. 1961.

FREEMAN, LINTON C., THOMAS J. FARARO, WARNER BLOOMBERG, JR. and MORRIS H. SUNSHINE. Locating Leaders in Local Communities: A Comparison of Some Alternative Approaches. pp 340-347. In: *The Structure of Community Power*. Michael Aiken and Paul E. Mott, editors. Random House, Inc., New York, New York. 1970.

GAMSON, WILLIAM A. Reputation and Resources in Community Politics. pp 333-348. In: Clark, Terry N. (ed.). *Community Structure and Decision-Making: Comparative Analyses*. Chandler Publishing Co. Scranton, Pa. 1968.

HUNTER, FLOYD. Community Power Structure. University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill. 1953.

POWERS, RONALD C. Identifying the Community Power Structure. North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 19, NCRS-5 Leadership Series No. 2, Iowa Cooperative Extension Service, Ames. 1965.

TAIT, JOHN L. and JOE M. BOHLEN. The Expected Role Performance of Community Power Actors in Five Iowa Communitjes. Unpublished paper presented at the Rural Sociological Meetings. 1967.

TAIT, JOHN L., JOE M. BOHLEN, and EDWARD A. WEDMAN. Changing Power Actors in a Midwestern Community. Unpublished paper presented at the Rural Sociological Society Meetings. 1975.

. . . AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Programs and activities of Cooperative Extension Service are available to all potential clientele without regard to race, color, sex or national origin. Anyone who feels discriminated against should send a complaint within 180 days to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

GLOSSARY

Activists Community leaders who work at implementing a program after it is judged as needed in that community (also called participants).

Authority A source of social power based on formal, legitimate rights of an office to act or make decisions as determined by the members of the social system. Authority is a property of the office not of the individual.

Behind the scenes leaders General power actors who have low visibility in the community, yet play a key role as an informal leader in decision-making.

Change agent Persons whose behavior and objectives focus on promoting and stimulating social action.

Community action programs Activities in a community, organized by a change agent, for the purpose of promoting desired social change.

Community decision A choice between alternative lines of action which is made by powerful persons or groups within the community and of which the goals are either change or maintenance of the community.

Decision-making method Procedure for identifying power actors that involves tracing the history of a collective decision concerning the community (also called event analysis).

Diffused power structure Power structure in which no discernable pattern of decision makers is evident.

Effectors Power actors who may act as activity leaders, organizing and administrating community programs and activities.

Elitist power structure Power structure in which the same power actors have the most social power regardless of the issue area.

External community knowledgeables Persons who do not live in the locality of interest, yet, who are perceived to be well-informed of the power structure and decision-making in the community.

Formal organization A group of people whose activities are explicitly coordinated, conventional and purposive toward a specific goal.

General power actors Power actors who have social power to affect community decisions regardless of their related issue area.

Influence A source of social power that resides in the individual power actor and his/her resources.

Influential organizations Formal groups in the locality of interest which have more social power and have a greater effect on community decisions than other organizations.

Influentials Power actors and key decision makers who have social power based on informal sources, personal characteristics, and influence.

Institutional sectors Areas of human activity centered around specific community functions such as politics, education or religion.

Internal community knowledgeables Persons who live in the locality of interest, and, who are perceived to be well-informed concerning the power structure and decision-making in the community.

Issue A local problem or "happening" that is perceived to involve community resources that are important to the community, to involve choices of action, to involve individuals and groups in the community, and to have the potential for disagreement.

Latent issues A community issue that has the potential to affect some aspect of the status quo but it is covertly blocked and doesn't develop into an open community issue.

Legitimation The process in social action in which community leaders and power actors are advised about the program in order to encourage their sanctioning of the planned action.

Legitimizers Those individuals (populace or power actors) who play the role of gatekeepers and who can rightfully give the approval, acceptance or support to an action program.

Pluralist power structure Power structure in which different power actors have the most social power in different issue areas.

Positional method Procedure for selecting power actors based on whether they occupy important positions in formal organizations.

Power actors Individuals who have the reputation of 1) a larger amount of social power than others in the locality, 2) the ability to decide issues, 3) the control of access to needed resources, and/or 4) the ability to legitimize final decisions.

Power actor pool The group of power actors who have the most social power in the community.

Power cliques Informal groups of power actors organized by a network of informal, interpersonal relationships.

Power structure A pattern of relationships among individuals which enables these individuals possessing social power to act in concert to affect community decisions on a given issue.

Reputational method Procedure of identifying power actors that involves a selected panel of knowledgeables who are asked to give a list of power actors in the locality.

Social action A group process including the strategies and tactics necessary to define the problem, plan, mobilize resources and put the plan into action in creating social change and attaining a desired goal.

Social participation method Procedure for identifying power actors that involves the listing of participants in voluntary associations in the community (also called social activity method).

Social power The capability to control the behavior of others.

Social power model An analytical model or framework that a change agent may use in analyzing the power structure of a community.

Specialized power actors Power actors who have social power to affect community decision in only one or two distinct issue areas in the community.

Visible leaders Prominent community leaders whose influence and participation in community decisions is direct and readily observable.

Voluntary association A group of people who are organized to promote some shared interest of its members and who participate on a voluntary basis.